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**RUSSWARD
Saintpaulia Growers**

JONESBORO, ARK.

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News Letter

June, 1951

Dear Friends:

An interesting crop of questions this month.

Q. I have a violet which is thick in the center. It will not bloom. I have looked and cannot see any bugs of any kind. Mrs. E.L., Florida.

A. You probably have an infestation of cyclamen mite. These little bugs are so tiny that it takes a powerful glass to see them at all. Repeated sprayings (every week or ten days) with nicotine sulphate have been known to clean up an infestation. Sodium selenate is also a good treatment, IF the plant isn't too far gone.

Q. Can you buy glass-wick so you can make clay pots self-watering? If so, where. Most of the glasswick pots are plastic or ceramic, don't clay pots do as well? Do they take a different soil mixture? Mrs. R.S., Iowa.

A. Have never tried to buy this, but surely you could find it at a seed store or garden-supply house someplace. If not, a thin strip of cotton cloth will produce the same result though it will rot out in time. Certainly, clay pots can be used this way. You'd probably need a larger wick with a clay pot than with a plastic or ceramic pot, though, because of the larger area of moisture loss due to the porous nature of the clay pots. Or do I make myself clear? If you've ever lost a plant because your wick was too large, you'll know darn well what I'm talking about. You have to adjust the wick to the moisture needs of the plant, otherwise you'll keep your plant too wet or too dry. Soil mixture doesn't matter particularly, but the size of the wick most definitely does.

Q. Do violets need an acid soil? What kind of fertilizer? How often should they be watered? Mrs. T.M., Michigan.

A. No, violets don't need an acid soil. They will do well unless the soil is very, very acid, or very, very alkaline. Anything somewhere in the middle seems to suit them all right. Any kind of fertilizer that's handy will do for violets. They should be watered when the soil feels dry to the touch.

Q. My violets grow to a lovely size and develop lovely big flowers and then just when they are seemingly at their best, the leaves begin to get limp and the flowers hang over and no matter what I do they eventually die. What's wrong? Mrs. E.O., Michigan.

A. You're watering too much. Or it could be that you're feeding a fertilizer which is too rich and burning the roots, causing crown rot. Most probably you become more and more zealous in your care of them as they begin to approach perfection, and an over-dose of zeal, with violets, is frequently fatal. Bear in mind that the big pretty plants don't need any more water or fertilizer than the scrawny ones. Less, if anything.

Q. What to do to keep pests off the violets. I have used alcohol to touch and kill them but as a rule the plant dies. Mrs. E.H.H., Texas.

A. Why not try a monthly spraying with nicotine sulphate or NNOR? Alcohol is good for "spot-removing" of mealy-bugs, and unless you downright BATHE the plant in it, shouldn't kill it. More likely that your plant died from too much water. Spring, particularly, is tricky. You don't realize how much extra moisture you have in your house when you open it up after it's been closed all winter. If you keep up the same watering program with your plants, you're due to run into trouble come the first rainy spell.

HEY. Mrs. A.S.R., Kansas. Mrs. E.B., Missouri, say: "Butane gas does NOT have any bad effect on violets. I use it. But it does seem to dry out the air, so be sure and keep water around—plenty of it."

Q. Leaves around edge of pot wither and die. Flowers so small it's a joke. I use a soft brush to brush the leaves. What are violet seeds? Where do they come from and how are they planted? Mrs. T.O.H., Missouri.

A. If it's ONLY the leaves at the edge of the pot, put some aluminum foil, florists foil, or wax paper around the edge of the pot. Accumulations of mineral salts on the edge of the pot cause the disintegration of leaves resting thereon. If it's the leaves AND the flowers of the same plant which are so laughably small, you have crown rot. You might try cutting the crown off at the soil level and re-rooting it on sand, but this isn't guaranteed to save it. A small brush is fine, but it's easier to wash the leaves off under a slow-running tap, using luke-warm water and allowing to dry thoroughly in a shady place. Violet seeds are violet seeds, with apologies to Gertrude Stein. They are what is left when you put pollen from one blossom on the stamen of another blossom, the flower part drops off, and the ovary begins to swell and after about six weeks, having finished growing, begins to shrivel. Open up the pod and plant seed on very fine sifted soil. Cover with glass.

Q. Why do bottom leaves curl under? Mrs. L., Illinois.

A. A little too dry and/or a little too chilly. Some varieties just "do" that.

'Bye until next month.

"Russ"

RUSSWARD
Saintpaulia Growers

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Sustaining Member African Violet Society of America, Inc.

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Azure Beauty—Double white with pale blue variegation. Large double full open flowers like double Neptune type with excellent foliage... **\$3.00**

Dark Beauty—Double white with dark blue variegation. Same flower and foliage type as Azure Beauty **\$3.00**

Double Orchid Girl—Excellent large orchid flowers, scalloped Girl foliage **\$3.00**

Double Sailors Delight—A double Sailor Girl. Pale blue double flower **\$3.00**

NEW SINGLES

Snow Girl—Pure white, girl foliage, large full bloom **\$3.00**

Red Velvet—(Ready June 15) Two-tone red shading to lighter red lower petals with upper petals resembling red velvet. Heavy dark green foliage, veined red underneath **\$2.75**

Pink Delight—(Ready June 15) Light clear pink flower, bronzy foliage **\$2.75**

Rose Marie—(Ready June 15) A true rose. Really lovely **\$3.00**

Purple Dawn—(Ready June 15) A solid bluish-purple impregnated with deeper purple veining in flower, a distinctly new color in violets. Profuse bloomer, heavy foliage, red veined underneath **\$3.00**

Fantasy—(Ready June 15) Lavender variegated flower **\$3.00**

SPECIAL — JUNE ONLY

We must reduce our stock to make room for growing fall plants The following group:

\$1.00 each, or 6 for \$5.00

Amethyst
Bi-Color
Blue Butterfly
Blue Girl
Blue Pet
Double Duchess
Diplotricha

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Lady Marion
Lancaster Red
Orchid Beauty
Red Girl
Rosalie
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Double Neptune—Lovely dark blue double. Shows all the Neptune characteristics with double flower of excellent habit \$1.50

Fringettes—Lovely rippled foliage, flowers frilled and crimped.

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Medium Blue	\$1.50
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White	\$2.75

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Lady Loreta—Improved Blue Girl. Unusually large foliage and flowers \$1.50

Orchid Wonder—Pale orchid, shades to dark in center of flower. Excellent flat, slick foliage \$1.75

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